

Postpartum depression is a complex mix of physical, emotional, and behavioral changes after the delivery of a child. These changes are attributed to a hormonal imbalance as the body returns to its pre-pregnancy state. Postpartum depression can occur at any time from the onset of birth up to 4 months post-delivery.

Postpartum depression is very common. Experts believe the rate could be at least twice as much as what current statistics tell us, as many cases go undiagnosed. Currently, counseling and anti-depressant medications are the primary treatments. Many women have benefited from these treatments, yet there remains a sub-population of mothers whose symptoms are not alleviated through these therapies.

A novel treatment has been designed to specifically treat postpartum depression. In 2019, the Food & Drug Administration approved an intravenous infusion treatment of this neurosteroid, which is a derivative of allopregnanolone. The treatment modulates the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis, which mediates the body's response to stress, and is modulated by GABAergic signaling.

This treatment design is groundbreaking as it targets the signaling thought to be deficient in hormone-sensitive postpartum depression and the gabaergic hypothesis of depression. The treatment is administered around the clock for 60 hours, or 2.5 days. Additionally, this treatment appears to show benefits very quickly, while traditional anti-depressants typically take 2 to 4 weeks to have a significant effect.

If untreated, postpartum depression can cause significant suffering in mothers and their families. This fast treatment option would be a much-needed breakthrough for families who are undergoing a stressful time and for women who are afflicted with this often overlooked condition.